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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Asad, N. (2019). Parental Preferences and Choices in Selection of Private Primary Schools. *Pakistan Administrative Review*, 3(3), 117-131. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-67653-6>

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# Parental Preferences and Choices in Selection of Private Primary Schools

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**ABSTRACT:** This study explored the underlying factors that influence parents' preferences towards private schools in Rawalpindi city, Pakistan. A total of 258 parents were selected through convenient sampling for the data collection. Mixed method approach was used to collect data from 258 parents whose children were studying in primary private schools. 250 parents filled the survey questionnaires, while 8 parents were interviewed. It was found that parents do not rely only on quality education but also consider other factors like school environment and facilities provided by school. A central finding in this research was that parents were finding better educational environment for their children. Parent's involvement is found to be very important factor in parental decisions regarding school selection.

**Keywords:** Parental perception; parental choice; private schools, primary education; quality education

**Reference:** Reference to this article should be made as: Asad, N. (2019). Parental preferences and choices in selection of private primary schools. *Pakistan Administrative Review*, 3(3), 117-131.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education refers to the systematic process of gaining knowledge. Education gives the way of living life and plays very important role for the wellbeing of the society at large. An educated person is an asset to the state. The more educated individuals of the society, the more civilized the society will be. Quality education is the basic need of a child whether boy or a girl that can make them a better person. Education helps people to become more aware about the society. Countries lacking quality education system face many problems such as inequality, gender discrimination, poverty, high crime rates, child labor, early marriages and many others. Provision of education is mandatory in Pakistan and is mentioned in the constitution of Pakistan about the provision of free and compulsory education (Ahmed & Sheikh, 2014).

The importance of parental decision while selecting a school for their children has been documented by various researchers. Parents are considered as key stakeholders while selecting schools for their children (Kisida & Wolf, 2010). Their opinions, expectations and thoughts also differ according to the varying standards, behaviors, demographics and cultural values (Ceglowski & Bacigalupa, 2002).

The education system in Pakistan is divided into two categories public and private. Every educational institution that provides education for the pre-university level but not associated with the state and charging fee to accomplish its objectives is known as a private school (Asadullah, 2009). Since 1990's, the number of private schools has increased in Pakistan. From year 2000 to 2005, the number of private schools increased from 32,000 to 47,000. The

enrolment rate in private schools has increased dramatically from 2001 to 2005, one out of every three children is enrolled in a private school (Andrabi, et al., 2007). According to authors private sector educational institutions have played a significant role towards education in Pakistan by not only increasing enrollment but also increasing number of schools. Pakistan has experienced similar trends in 2010-2011, 25% of school going children were enrolled in private schools (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

The present study has been conducted in Rawalpindi city. The city of Rawalpindi is recognized for the presence of high-quality private schools. According to Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement (PSLM, 2012-2013) the literacy rate of Rawalpindi is 70.5% and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> among the 37 districts of Punjab.

The main purpose of the study is to identify the factors influencing the parents' decision while selecting private schools for their children. This study investigates the parental preferences towards primary private schooling in Rawalpindi city. Attending a good primary school with high quality of education has more impact on the academic progress of a child. Numerous studies have provided the understanding that how school characteristics affect parental preferences in school selection (Badri & Mohaidat, 2014; Skallerud, 2011). However, many researches (Rehman et al., 2010; Yaacob et al., 2014; Goldring et al., 2008; Collins & Snell, 2000) have either focused on qualitative or quantitative approaches to explore factors related to parental factors. Researchers have concluded that more research on this area is needed using mixed method approach to overcome the weakness of using only quantitative or qualitative research design (Cheong et al., 2016). Thus, the present study adopts mixed method approach using survey and interview techniques.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Education is very important to determine the role of a person in the society whether it is productive or not. Therefore, gaining quality of education is as important as the education itself (Jenkins & Lanning, 2002). Education improves the value of productivity of a person by teaching the values, skills, actions and attitudes (Inglis & Aers, 2008). Private sector has played significant role in the development of education in Pakistan. These institutions gain support from the educational policies and their substantial contribution played significant role in education system of the country. Pakistan is struggling to meet the targets of World Declaration on Education for All (EFA, 2000) and Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs). Hence, the contribution of private sector in improving the conditions of education and providing quality education in the country is immense (Qaisrani et al., 2011).

Education leads to the development of the country, by providing skilled labour force, greater chances of equal opportunity, economic growth, better life, good health, low crime rate, national unity and stable political environment. Following this perception many nations spend a lot on education (Tariq et al., 2012; Khan, 2006).

There has been rapid increase in private schooling indicating an increased children enrollment in Pakistan. The quality of education provided in private schools is better as compared to public schools in terms of both teacher quality, facilities and better teacher student ratios, because of these parents are willing to pay high fee in private schools (Andrabi, et al., 2002).

Private schools at primary level are considered as a key factor in basic education of children (Andrabi, et al., 2002). Parents choose school for their children, which are compatible with their values and ideas. Parents are the choosers who choose to socialize their children in a certain way to become productive members of the society. They are aware about their values and concepts and they want to teach same values and concepts to their children as well (Walberg, 2007). According to Walberg (2007) there will be higher achievement levels in education when the school choice is made well.

According to Khan (2006) children who have educated parents, attend private schools because there is a positive perception of parents towards private schools. Educated parents prefer schools with more facilities. The other reason given is educated parents have higher income and they are ready to pay high fee in private school just to give quality education to their children. Parents who are satisfied with the quality education being provided to their child are more loyal and dedicated to the schools their children attend (Legg, 2009). Farah, et al. (1996) is of the view that the school quality is a major reason of school's success. It can be measured using different indicators like average enrollment of boys and girls in schools, low dropout rate, high attendance rate and high rate of students' achievement. Several other factors are also identified by the authors including school's environment, teacher's devotion, well-educated/competent teachers and quality of curriculum describes the school quality. Other than that student's ability to practice and learn, proper infrastructure, good relation between teachers and students, punctuality of students and teachers also indicates the quality and success of the school.

According to Marzano (2003) there are three dimensions, which contribute to the school quality. School is first factor focusing on quality curriculum, parental participation, provision of secure and better environment and the level of professionalism. The second level focuses on teacher's way of teaching, management of classrooms and the way curriculum is designed by the teacher. The third level focuses on students' background and home environment, ability of a student to learn and his behavior. Marzano considered last factor as important to make functional the rest. According to Berry (2002) parents send their children to school with high academic performance.

Academic staff and syllabubs are considered as the essential elements while deciding for school. Parents mostly focus on quality of academic staff and syllabus, while selecting a school for their children. High quality of professional staff can educate students' in better way, this is the reason parents prefer schools with professional academic staff (Shah, Nair & Bennett, 2013). According to Badri and Mohaidat (2014), parent's primary concern is safe environment provided by the institution. Safe environment provide confidence to both parents and children. Hence, Parents pay more attention to the safe school environment as it generates their children's ability to perform well. According to the study of Rehman, et al., (2010), higher class prefer private school over public school for their children. This leads to the satisfaction of parents for choosing school for their children. Additionally, parents focus on other factors including, size of their family and their income level, apart from the qualification of school staff as well as the performance of school (Rehman, et al., 2010).

According to Skallerud (2011) parents prefer institutions having good reputation in the society. Institutions with good repute are highly recognized by the parents while selecting school for their children (Badri et al., 2014). Parents show loyalty towards those institutes which have good repute (Skallerud, 2011). Schools with positive reputation have high probability of being selected by the parents. Barnett, Jermier and Lafferty (2006) defines reputation as the perception of the people based on judgments about an organization which asses the performance of that organization. According to researchers (West 2001, Bosetti 2004, Jackson & Bisset 2005, Ungerleider 2004, Van Pelt, et al., 2007) the reputation of school and its results influence the decision of parents in their school selection.

According to Memon (2007) apart from large school systems, the quality education of other schools is questionable as they have appointed incompetent teachers who are under qualified and untrained, the maximum level of their education is intermediate. People view private education system as a system promoting class structures in the society as they serve the higher class of the society. The fees of private schools is higher than government schools and majority of them not only pay their teachers lower salaries but are operate from houses without proper buildings and playgrounds for children (Khan, 2006).

Research has revealed that excellent quality of primary education provides future benefits for the children (Barnett, 2003; Gormley, Gayer, Phillips & Dawson, 2005). According to Dronkers and Avram (2010), private schools attract rich class of the society and are exclusive in their nature having their own resources and are well structured. The characteristics and financial background of parents play significant role in selecting school. Researchers highlight that studying parental involvement is not a single concept it is correlated to many other factors as well and their relation which each other (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008). There is a difference between parental involvement and parental participation. Parental involvement is defined as the involvement of parents in development of child as well as their involvement in education both at home and in schools. When parents are actively taking part in school activities of their child, this phenomenon is known as parental participation (Smith, 2000).

The relationship between student's achievement and parental involvement is positive. Parental involvement has been defined in two ways that is parental involvement in terms of parental expectations and parental assistance in homework. The first has positive impact on student's learning but latter has negative impact (Wilder, 2014). The positive attitude of parents towards child's educations, teacher and school is positively related to increased educational performance (Topor et al, 2010). According to studies at-home and in-school parental involvement are important in diverse ways. The at-home involvement of parents is positively related to the performance of the child, but in-school involvement is negatively related. Parents should monitor and encourage child to pursue their academic goals because it directly impacts the performance of the child in positive manner but should avoid in-school involvement. But unfortunately, the in-school involvement of parents has negative impacts on the performance of the child the reasons are still unclear (Chowa, Masa, & Tucker, 2013).

According to Van Dunk and Dickman (2008) parents want best for their children and try to fulfil the necessities of their child. It is their responsibility to maintain wellbeing and safety of children and protect their health and growth. They have right to make choice for school in which they want to send their child. The best form of parental involvement is engaging parents directly in learning process of their children, which results in high achievement of their children (Jinnah & Walter, 2008).

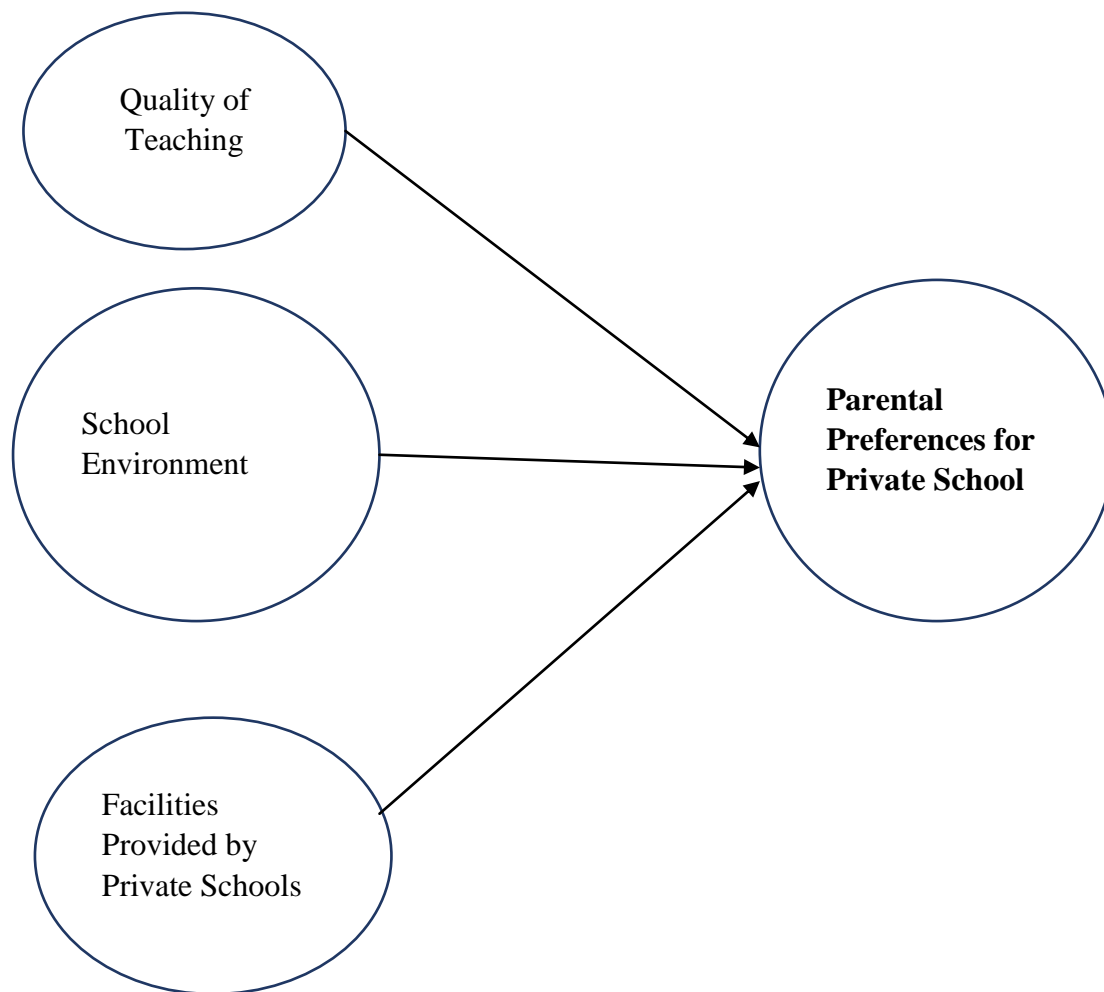
The literature determines that parents exercise choice to the level of choices available which are within the academic priorities they place on their child education. Particularly parents exercise choices with priorities like academics, quality of teaching, school environment, convenience, facilities provided by school, characteristics of school and safety. Several studies find out that parents typically prefer academic priorities while selecting school for their children (Kleitz, Weiher, Tedin, & Matland, 2000). According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2005), private schools provide better education in developed countries than public schools and people prefer private schools for their children. It has been pointed out that the strict regulation is important for the teachers to increase their efficiency along with good knowledge, communication and technical skills (Schneider, et al., 2002).

According to the study of Hoxby (2002) parents consider quality of teacher's education as a key factor while deciding for the school. Those characteristics which help a person to achieve his/her teaching capabilities in effective and well-organized way and also improve the capabilities of students in terms of academic achievements are known as teacher's skills (Ciani et al., 2008). Shami and Hussain (2005) points out that private school teacher in Pakistan is highly competitive.

Smith (2000) defines school as a well-structured building having all the basic facilities for the students for their better learning and concentration. To maintain effectiveness, it is necessary that a school should be well managed and organized. Such schools not only focus on

academic practices, but their effort is on the social development of the child. As a result, schools provide different facilities in convenient way so that everyone can access it easily (Smith, 2000). The environment of school is most important for the quality education (Rehman et. al., 2010). Peterson, et al. (2010) analysed that the facilities provided in schools had minor impact on the performance of the child. According to Bruce (2010), proper school environment provides students with the power to show their abilities and it is proved that physical environment is important to do well in studies.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between variables of the research. The level of parental preferences is influenced by the school characteristics like quality of teaching, school environment and facilities provided by school.



*Figure 1: Model of the Study*

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present study mixed method approach was used to investigate the reasons why parents choose to send their children in private schools. Both semi structured interviews and survey questionnaire were designed to examine the factors of choosing private schools. According to Viadero (2005) mixed method research is a combination of different research



strategies. For the study, mixed method approach is considered as most appropriate to investigate factors regarding parental preferences towards private schooling in Pakistan.

The population of the study consisted of all parents whose children were studying in private primary schools in the city of Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The data related to number of households sending their child to private schools is sparse, convenient sampling was used. Parents were chosen based on easy accessibility and keeping in view the time constraint. Parents from different demographics were involved in this study.

Since there exists no authenticated list showing exact number of children going to private school in the Rawalpindi city or household database indicating private schooling of children, therefore, a sample of 300 parents were chosen to secure credible data for survey questionnaire. Eight parents were selected for the interview session to gather detailed information.

Pilot test was conducted before distributing the questionnaire. This was done to ensure the reliability of questionnaire and interview guideline. For pilot study, sample of 30 respondents were chosen to fill the survey questionnaire, while three interviews were conducted. The reliability test was conducted to make sure the survey instrument was consistent. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to find out the extent to which the items in questionnaire were consistent and reliable. Variance of each item was explored during the reliability analysis. The overall value of Alpha was .949. Hence, it was clear that the questionnaire was valid and reliable for the study. The result of reliability is shown in table number 3.1.

**Table 1: Reliability Analysis**

<b>Item Scale</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Parental Satisfaction</b>	.939
<b>Parental Involvement</b>	.940
<b>Overall Factors</b>	<b>.945</b>
<b>a. Quality of teaching</b>	.633
<b>b. School Environment</b>	.916
<b>c. Facilities</b>	.924
<b>Overall Alpha</b>	<b>.949</b>

Qualitative data was collected via semi structured interviews. The respondents were interviewed in the months of June and July 2017. Respondents gave interviews happily and they were collected after survey.

Survey questionnaire was used as a tool for collecting quantitative data. The survey instrument consisted of 56 items regarding demographics, parental choice and factors affecting it. The questionnaires were distributed to the parents who have enrolled their children in private schools at primary level. 30 questionnaires were distributed among respondents for its pre-testing. Some errors and deficiencies were noted after pre-testing. After refining the questionnaire, they were distributed among the respondents for the data collection. Certain changes were made like rephrasing and replacement of questions.

Interviews were scheduled after taking permission from the respondents. It was arranged in English language for the academic purpose. The interviews lasted approximately an hour. However, for the ease of parents, interviews were conducted in Urdu language. Later transcriptions were made in English. Transcripts were shared with the parents to identify any mistakes or errors during translation from Urdu to English.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. Regression test was conducted to measure the impact of independent variables on dependent variables. For the statistical analysis of data SPSS (version 20) software was used.

#### 4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, and 250 questionnaires were returned that were used for final analysis. Eight semi structured interviews were conducted from the respondents. The demographic information included the age, educational level, level of income and occupation of the parent. Table 2 presents the demographics of the respondents.

**Table 2:** Demographics of Respondent Parents (n=250)

Criteria	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	26 – 35	37	14.8
	36 – 45	104	41.6
	46 – 55	93	37.2
	>56	16	6.4
Education	Matric	12	4.8
	Intermediate	46	18.4
	Undergraduate	90	36.0
	Graduate	90	36.0
	Any other	12	4.8
No. of Children	1-2	35	14.0
	3-4	141	56.4
	5-6	70	28.0
	>6	4	1.6
Income (PKR)	12k – 29k	1	0.4
	30k – 49k	90	36.0
	50k – 69k	86	34.4
	>70k	73	29.2
Parental Occupation	Teacher	38	15.2
	Business	35	14.0
	Government job	68	27.2
	Private job	109	43.6

The total number of children affects the parent's choice while selecting private school for their children. Parental involvement has positive impact on children achievement and background factors like social class and family size (Desforjes & Abouchar, 2003). The surveyed parents had number of children and it also covered this aspect. Out of 250 respondents, majority had 3-4 children. Income is also considered as the key factor while selecting school. According to Gouda et al., (2013), the economic status of parents play vital role in selecting school for their children. Parents with high level of income can afford the cost of private schools. The profession of parents was also considered in the research. According to Heckman and Carneiro (2003), parents with the stable income and occupational background play positive role in school selection of better school for their children and it brings positive impact on the children. The result indicates that 43.6% of parents were employed in private sector.



The bivariate correlation analysis using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between Parental Preferences in quality of education, school environment and facilities provided by school.

**Table 3:** Correlation Coefficient Matrix

	PP	QT	FP	SE
<b>Parental Preferences (PP)</b>	1			
<b>Quality of teaching (QT)</b>	.348**	1		
<b>Facilities Provided by School (FP)</b>	.376**	.113	1	
<b>School Environment (SE)</b>	.499**	.331	.482**	1

The results show that the correlation coefficient between parents' preferences in quality of education, school environment and facilities provided by school were significantly high. The results indicate positive and significant relationship between parents' preferences in quality of education, school environment and facilities provided by school. The high correlation implies that due to high level of quality teaching, facilities provided by school and school environment were more likely to choose private school by parents for their children. The survey results indicate that school environment has a significant relationship with parents' preferences and choices. This shows that the more superior level of environment provided by school, the more parents choose private school for their children. The results also show significant relationship of quality teaching and facilities provided by school.

The table 4 shows the regression analysis results. The regression results indicate that increase in quality of teaching will increase parental preferences towards private schooling. The value of R square (.121) that shows 12.1% influence of quality teaching on parental preferences. If the level of quality of teaching will increase so the likelihood to admit children in private school will also increase. Similarly, increase in quality of school environment will increase the level of parental preferences. The value of R square (.249) that shows 24.9% influence of school environment on parental preferences. Likewise, increase in quality of facilities provided in school will increase the level of parental preferences.

**Table 4:** Regression Results QT and PP

Independent Var.	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F-Stat	Beta	t- Stat	Sig.
Quality Teaching	.348	.121	.117	34.101	.348	23.063	.000
School Environ	.499	.249	.249	82.406	.499	13.973	.000
Facilities	.376	.142	.138	40.897	.376	13.806	.000

To achieve study objectives, semi structured interviews were also conducted in order to get the better understanding of the aspects. Eight parents were selected to gather the information on preferences of parents towards schools which lead to parental preferences of private schooling. Many factors influencing their decision while choosing school for their children were discovered. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Interviews were coded, and

themes were developed in order to get the better and complete understanding of the responses. Table 5 provides the demographic data of interview respondents.

**Table 5: Interview Respondents Demographics**

Sr.	Relationship with child	No. of children	Education	Occupation	Income/month
1	Mother	1	Master's	Teacher	>40,000
2	Mother	2	Master's	Private Job	>40,000
3	Father	3	Bachelor's	Businessman	>70,000
4	Mother	2	Other	Government Job	>40,000
5	Father	1	Bachelor's	Private Job	>40,000
6	Mother	1	Master's	Private Job	>40,000
7	Mother	2	Master's	Government Job	>50,000
8	Mother	4	Master's	Private Job	> 40,000

Four major themes were identified in the interviews. These themes pertained to school environment (87.5%), quality of education (100%), teacher's behaviour (87.5%) and safe and disciplined environment (75%). Other factors mentioned by the respondents provision of Islamic education by the schools, facilities provided by schools, their location and fee charged.

#### *School Environment*

School environment was first choice of respondents who chose private school for their children. It was noticed that parent's primary concern was peaceful and safe environment. School environment was considered as the most important factor in decision of parents while selecting school for their children. School environment consists of welcoming environment, organized and well-structured school environment promoting social environment among the students. Good reputation has attracted the respondents to choose private schools. Once the parents are satisfied with the reputation and environment of the school, they do not hesitate to admit their children in these institutions. Respondents choose private schools because of healthy educational environment, peaceful atmosphere. Social interactions and extra-curricular activities were the reason of selecting private schools for children. It was observed that peace of mind of the parents was a key factor to choose educational institution. As a matter of fact, peaceful environment is essential for the excellent results.

#### *Quality Education*

It was observed that the other main reason of choosing private school was quality of education. According to their response good learning environment promote quality education. It includes quality of academic programme, trained teachers, and high academic standards. These are some reasons identified by the respondents to choose a school with high quality of education. According to the respondents it was necessary for schools to provide quality education which helps in character building and polishing the abilities of the students. Values were considered important for the character building of a child, so schools with high values were selected by parents. The quality of education in private schools increase the abilities of children. School values are very important as nowadays children are exposed to all kind of knowledge and cultural values, so they should be taught what their cultural values are and to enable them to choose the right path. Parents also mentioned that high standard of education has become essential for their children to meet future challenges.

*Teacher's behaviour*

As observed in the interviews of various parents it was very clear that they give immense importance to the behaviour of teachers. They expect their children to be in the hands of well trained, mannered and dedicated teachers. Qualified teachers and staff play a key role in reputation of any institution who are dealing with the new generation of the country. Good characters in schools play role model for the students who communicate with them on daily basis. It was observed that parents prefer to discuss their children's concerns with the teachers. So, well behaved and well managed teachers become great comfort for them. Well trained teacher knows how to arouse the abilities of the students. They guide them to achieve various goals. Since the teachers have great influence on the students, the selection of qualified teachers become of great importance.

*Safe and disciplined Environment*

Safe and disciplined environment was one of the reasons parents choose private school for their children. Respondents consider it as the basic requirement of children to develop in a healthy and disciplined environment. The atmosphere of the school effects the learning process of the child. Many parents were attracted to private school because of disciplined environment. Parents want their children to be well disciplined so that they prefer private schools. Due to the uncertain threats of security, parents want to send their child in safe schools where safety of each and every child would be preferred. Parents do not want to let their children out and play and they expect same from the schools. Parents have identified this reason of admitting their children in private school where they are in strict security.

*Islamic Education*

According the respondents, teaching of Islamic values is very important. They wanted to send their children in those schools where Islamic education is mandatory.

*Facilities and location of school*

Parents want to send their child in those schools where educational facilities were provided. They know the needs of their children and role of facilities provided in school. Location was another factor mentioned by different parents. Parents preferred schools near their homes as it was easy for other members of the household to pick children after school.

*Financial Concerns (Fees)*

Another point raised by the parents was of affordable fees. Parents want to provide best education to their children with affordable cost of school.

**4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The present study investigated different factors that affect parental choices in selecting private primary school for their children. The study was carried out in Rawalpindi city. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to collect and analyze the data. All target respondents were selected based on convenience sampling without taking consideration of demographic backgrounds and the schools in which respondent's children are studying. Parents with children who are studying in private schools were selected who willingly helped to carry out the research. Confidentiality was maintained of each participant.

The quantitative findings indicate that the school environment is important factor that predicts the school choice of parents. From the findings it is determined that there is a significant relationship between the quality of education, safe and disciplined school environment, teacher's behavior and facilities provided by school with parental choice. It was observed that parents were satisfied with the quality of private school. Most respondents belong to stable and good socio-economic background. They were well-educated and were earning reasonable income. Teacher's quality and their conduct plays key role in parent's

choice. The learning environment of the private school was better according to respondents and they were fulfilling the needs of children. Parent's involvement was seemed to be very important factor in parent's decision.

The qualitative data analysis also indicates that parents are majorly influenced by four factors: 1) school environment; 2) quality education; 3) teacher's behaviour in the school, and 4) disciplined school environment.

Respondents indicated several reasons of selecting private school for their children. Their perception varies. The healthy school environment was considered as the key factor and important in selecting school for children. It was observed that school environment was popular factor of parent's choice. The positive school climate was other factor due to which parents choose private schools. According to some parents, the maintenance of discipline is very crucial. Providing safe environment to the children is very important for the parents. School reputation was another factor which convinced parents to choose private school. It plays a vital role in development of child. Respondents were satisfied with the current private school their children attend. The reasons of choosing private school is good academic program, school values, behaviour of teachers, facilities provided by school, hard work on polishing abilities of students, high standard of education, location, safety measures, disciplined routine. Results of both qualitative and quantitative portion indicated that parents' level of preferences towards private school increase with the environment provided by the school.

Quality of education was considered a major factor behind the preferences of parents. Responses showed that major reason of selection of a private school was quality of education. Parents have identified that excellent quality of academic program was their priority. Parents were well satisfied by the quality standards of private school as it was providing high standards of education. The schools which are providing better facilities are more preferred by the parents.

Another factor which was observed from the responses to be a major preference by the parents was the highly qualified teachers and faculty members. Parents were concerned by the standards of education of the teachers to be skilled enough to meet the demands of children. Quality of teaching has significant relationship between parental satisfaction and involvement. The results showed that the facilities provided by school have also build significant relationship between parental involvement and parental satisfaction. Parents who were involved in the education of their children were more likely to choose private school. According to the respondents, their opinions are more facilitated and valued in private schools.

The qualitative responses showed very high satisfaction of parents with the quality of private schools. Most of the parents identified academic reasons for admitting their child in private school. Despite demographic differences, parents choose what was important for their children. The high priority of parents was good environment of the school. Safety of school and good reputation were other factors which influenced the choice of parents. It was observed that the facilities provided by private schools were considered as key factor by the parents while selecting school for their children. Quality of teaching and school environment played significant role in influencing the decision of parents while selecting private school. It is believed by several researchers that parents think the quality of private schools is superior (Peterson & Llaudet, 2006).

It was observed that experienced teachers leave behind them excellent generations of students who have very positive impact on societies and ultimately on various achievements of the people of the country. After parents, teachers have great influence on children. Sometimes it has been observed that the children respect and are affected more by the teachers than the parents.

The present study has numerous implications for policy makers, for academia, for parents and school management. The foremost implication is the provision of standardized curriculum across all private schools to ensure the quality of curriculum in education system. The curriculum should be made easy and self-explanatory and understandable. It should include real life examples, well suited to the age level of students. Textbooks should be made attractive for primary level students to gain their interest.

The school should provide modern educational resources to improve the educational system of school. Team work is required at this stage for the provision of educational environment, organizational management as well as developing and improving physical components of the school. They should provide materials for education like teacher's kit, equipment for classrooms, laboratories, educational buildings and play areas. Along with the physical gadgets, teachings training, communication methods should be focused. This will improve the components of educational environment.

Practical requirements are those necessary needs which parents want for their child. These needs must be met. No matter how wonderful a private school may be in other aspects, if it cannot meet your practical requirements, then you must rule that school out as a possibility. On the other hand, extracurricular requirements are also important. Extracurricular activities are more important for the child and his/her development. They will help parents to decide between two schools that made it through the practical requirements filter and have otherwise equal academic programs. Parents must consider the location of the school besides these requirements. The last one is cost of the school, whether that school is affordable or not for the family.

The school administration, management, and specially teachers play vital role in success of the school. School management is considered as the most important factor that affects student achievement. The research proved that the people in management of primary education have a profound influence of academic success of students (Altun & Çakan, 2008). The research affirms that there is a connection between school environment, quality of teaching and facilities provided by the school with parental preferences towards private school. Thus, the school management should understand the role and impact of parental choices towards the success of school. School management should take some training and special educational courses for managing administrating school properly. School management should ensure the availability of skilled teachers for primary grade classes. They should focus on the use of proper methods of teaching regarding the age and grade of student. They should provide effective communication environment within the class and dealing with the individual students. The use of modern educational resources must be ensured.

To conclude the study validates the Walberg's (2007) Market Theory of Choice. As parents choose the schools according to their preferences and needs like quality education, school environment and facilities provided by school. The results showed that parents do not rely only on quality of education but also consider other factors like school environment and facilities provided by school. The findings concluded that parents were finding better educational environment for their children.

For future researchers it is recommended that bigger sample size encompassing other cities should be taken into account for more meaningful results. Further, the present study did not differentiate between high-end schools and low-end schools. Future studies can focus on comparative analysis involving types of private schools. The study focused only on private primary schools. Future researchers could focus on primary and secondary level schooling as well for better understanding of the factors that influence parental preferences. The present study focused only on few of the variables that affect parental choices in selection of private school. It is suggested that future researchers should focus on parental demographics as well



along with other moderator and intervening variables such as culture etc. to gather useful insights.

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